**Creative Writing: Course Info**

Ms. O’Halloran **Materials:** pens/pencils

mohalloran@ewingboe.org a marble copybook

Room 111 a two pocket folder

a zip/flash drive

1’’ three-ring binder w/ clear display pockets on front/back cover

Welcome to Creative Writing. Although this course is an elective course, it should be considered a rigorous course for students that have a serious interest in writing and that are willing to work hard. If this does not sound like you, consider moving to another elective.

**Goal:** Students will have the opportunity to explore all aspects of writing and discourse. Students will read and evaluate various writing styles as well as compose original pieces of prose and poetry. The objectives will include giving and taking criticism, employing different types of writing style and devices, taking compositional risks, and understanding writing as a process (which includes multiple revisions). By the end of the course students will have developed a polished portfolio displaying their best work and the progress made throughout the course. (This will serve as a final exam grade.)

**Being a Creative Writer:** In order to become a creative writer, many steps need to be taken. The biggest step you can take is by opening yourself up to the creative world. This takes serious effort and practice. Practice generating ideas through listening. Listen to what you hear on a daily basis: voices, conversations, natural noises, strange noises, music, words, etc. Sometimes a word, phrase, or situation may ignite something for you, if it does do not forget it—write it down! Also, to develop as a creative writer, you must also be an avid reader (as much as you may not want to hear it—it is totally true!). So read everything! Try reading the newspaper in the morning, a magazine you would not normally pick up, a biography of a famous leader, a book a friend just read, song lyrics by a new artist, a poem written by a relative, etc. Keep your mind open. No reading is too complicated, no writing assignment unmanageable, no composition too good for improvement, no excuses. Lastly, practice, practice, practice. To become a writer (which is what we must be in this class) you must write every day. Sometimes (especially at the beginning) you will feel devoid of ideas, but this is never the case, there is always something to be explored.

**Objectives:**

* Read, explore, discuss, and evaluate literary examples from a variety of cultures, genres, styles, and time periods.
* Examine the use of literary devices and innovations in works considered.
* Experiment with writing in all genres of writing (fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry).
* Imitate the styles of classic and contemporary writers.
* Create original works, attending to the development of a personal style (voice appropriate to purpose and audience).
* Focus on all phases of the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, revision, editing, and publishing).
* Evaluate personal writing and participate in writing workshops with others.
* Collaborate on the creation of a children’s book, screenplay, and magazine.
* Build and maintain a personal portfolio of writing to display development and showcase strengths.
* Make self reflections and evaluations.

**Course Policies:** Attendance: Adherence to EHS’s attendance policy is a must. Please be on present and on time. It is your job as a student to be present and give 100%. If you are absent it is your responsibility to get all the work you missed, no excuses. I will not chase you to get you your work. If you have questions regarding the work or what else you missed please ask me before or after school or during independent writing time during class. If you are absent one day, you have one additional day to turn in the work, absent two days you get two extra days, etc. I do not accept classwork and homework assignments late, no exceptions. Major pieces turned in late will be marked down 10% each day late. If you are having trouble with an assignment, or outside problems, please see me ahead of time (prior to the due date of the assignment) to work something out.

**Expectations:** Respect is the primary rule of this classroom. This means every student in this room is to show respect at all times towards the instructor, their peers, any substitutes or visitors, themselves, and all work. Due to the type of work indicative of a creative writing course it is essential that everyone in the room is respectful, mature, serious, and sensitive at all times. When critiquing other students’ work your goal is to help them improve their writing, so anything offered should be honest, constructive criticism. Conduct yourself in a mature fashion, not only abiding by what is right and wrong as outlined by the Code of Conduct, but by the morals that help compose one’s personal character. In this course we will not only grow as writers, we will also grow as individuals part of a greater whole.

**Workshopping:** Workshops will be held frequently. Some days you will be workshoping independently on your own pieces, some days you will be conferencing with me, some days you will be doing peer reviews or group work and some days we will have critiquing workshops. This means that we will be critiquing everyone’s writing a couple times throughout the semester. When participating as a critic, remember that the comments should be helpful.  Your goal is to help them improve as a writer and also notice what audiences look for when reading.  If we are all respectful and helpful there is no need to hold back. A productive workshop cannot happen if everyone is too reserved with their comments or afraid to make anything besides ‘positive’ critiques. Since our goal is to help each other improve, all critiques are positive.

**Computers:** All formal assignments MUST be typed; if you run into an emergency you may email it to me (however I am not responsible for not receiving it or for cryptic illegible fonts), or neatly handwrite it error free. For these assignments enough advanced notice will be given that arrangements can be made to go to a friend or relative’s house, or use the media center if you do not have a home computer. We will also have class time with computers for this purpose. If you use your time wisely and complete all steps of the writing process on time, then you should have time to type your pieces in school during class. Because of this it is essential that you save your work on the school computers, and on two of your own devices (a zip/flash drive, CD, etc.), Save everything, save everywhere and save often.

**Class Map:** Your marble copybook, or writer’s journal, needs to be in class every day. Do not leave them at home or in your locker. Also do not leave them in the room. Keep them on you at all times. The inbox for classwork and homework is a black wire basket on the front table. Individual folders to keep drafts, copies of peers’ stories, graded pieces, etc. will be kept in a box labeled for your class in front of the windows.

**Grade Breakdown Per Marking Period:**

**25% --** Participation (includes participation in discussions, workshops, weekly responses, in-class writing, and take-home assignments, as well as your Journal)

**25% --** Classwork

**50%** -- Writing – formal, finished pieces

**Final Exam** – Portfolio Review and Reflection

**Daily Routine:**

* Each day when you come in to class, you are to complete the Do Now in your copybook. Please date each entry and give the entry a title. I do not want to miss any of your entries when I check the copybooks.
* After you complete your Do Now there will be two other short activities for you to complete. One will be a single simple adjective on the board. You are to copy the word into your copybooks and underneath it list as many synonyms for that adjective as possible- these can be other adjective, similes, or metaphors.
* The second activity may be for your specific assigned group or for the entire class. There will be four pairs of descriptive words listed on the board. You are to write them in your copybook and then put each pair into complex descriptive sentences or longer passages.

Each of the above three assignments should be done at the start of class without any prompting from me. You know what to do!

* After we review the beginning assignments, we will do a mini-lesson together as a class to introduce a new device, technique, or assignment, or to review a current assignment and incorporate additional elements to what we are working on.
* If there is time after the lesson, it will be spent on independent writing, conferencing with peers, teacher conferences, presentation, or class roundtable discussion.

It is essential in this class that you take responsibility for your own work. Often many different activities will be going on at once such as conferences and independent writing; it is your responsibility to stay on task and to complete all of your assignments on time. Also do not get distracted by other students, we will not all always be working on the same piece.